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SUBJECT: FRAUD SUMMARY - BELFAST - MARCH- AUGUST 2009

REF: STATE 057623

11. Country Conditions:

As part of the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland is a developed industrialized country with a well-established infrastructure. Like the rest of the UK, Northern Ireland is suffering as a result of the global credit crunch and economic downturn. The unemployment rate in Northern Ireland is 6.7%, but Northern Ireland remains below the UK average of 7.9% and lower than the European Union (8.9%) and Republic of Ireland (12.2%). As the political situation in Northern Ireland has become more stable, it has proved an attractive option for economic migrants. Northern Ireland has seen an influx of Polish, Chinese, Philippine and Indian nationals, particularly in the medical professions. As well, there have been a number of migrants from the new Eastern European accession states. But, as economic conditions decline globally, Northern Ireland is likely to see the influx of new arrivals decrease. According to the Home Office Work Registration Scheme, which documents those from EU states coming to work in Northern Ireland, the latest figures would suggest that arrivals to Northern Ireland are declining.

The Northern Ireland authorities are reliable. Corruption is not a problem and public records are scrupulously maintained. The problems of identity fraud and related crimes are increasing. The U.K. Immigration and the Police Service's Foreign Nationals Unit are reliable and competent and the Consulate General maintains a good working relationship with both.

12. NIV Fraud:

Post accepts visa applicants from all over the UK so our applicant pool is the same as Embassy London. Although post does not have a very high incidence of NIV fraud, because of our applicant pool, we share Embassy London's areas of fraud concern.

FPU London has identified certain nationalities as high-fraud risks. Post routinely subjects applications submitted by nationals of those countries to a high degree of scrutiny. Post also pays close attention to Indian H1B applicants working in the computer industry and carefully reviews L1 applicants who appear to be sole-traders or to own small businesses without any obvious succession management structure in place. During 2008, post returned two H1B petitions one L1 petition to KCC with revocation requests.

As part of the NIV screening process, LES regularly make telephone calls and conduct internet searches to verify the existence of businesses and educational institutions and to verify that supporting documentation submitted is genuine. ConOff regularly uses Lexis Nexis to confirm the existence of U.S. addresses, businesses, etc. Passports and UK immigration stamps are routinely examined for authenticity. Post makes full use of KCC memos attached to petition cases and of the Text Search and Petitioner Lookup functions in CCD.

Post has very helpful contacts with DHS/CBP Dublin, the local British Passport Office's Anti-Fraud Unit, the local UK Border Agency (UKBA), and the Police Service of Northern Ireland. FPU London provides assistance as required and allows us access to anti-fraud tools not available at post.

ConOff recently acquired an ADIS logon so post has embarked on a series of small validation studies. ConOff is currently verifying departures from the U.S. using ADIS for a sampling of Nigerian, Indian, Chinese, Philippine, and Polish applicants who applied for a visa between January and June 2009. So far, approximately 70% of those sampled have traveled, and of those ADIS confirms 100% recorded and timely departures. Post's overall adjusted refusal rate during the period sampled was 6.4%. The TCN adjusted refusal rate was 14%. ConOff also intends to conduct a validation study of J1 visa applicants who indicated that they would travel for the summer 2008 season. ConOff will report to CA/FPP at greater length when validation studies are complete.

¶3. IV Fraud:

Post does not process IV applications.

¶4. DV Fraud:

Post does not process DV applications.

¶5. ACS and U.S. PASSPORT Fraud:

Post has taken onboard recommendations in State 00028140 in relation to anti-fraud strategies for overseas posts. ConOff routinely does PIERS and MIV checks on renewal applicants as well as emergency replacement applications. Post also routinely utilizes the Social Security Administrations matrix to identify inconsistencies in biographical information.

¶6. Adoption Fraud:

Post does not process adoption applications.

¶7. Use of DNA Testing:

For this reporting period Post has no cases involving the use of DNA testing.

¶8. Asylum and other DHS Benefits fraud:

Post does not process any asylum or DHS applications.

¶9. Alien smuggling, trafficking, organized crime, terrorist travel:

Recent reports from the Organized Crime Task Force revealed the dismantling of a Chinese organized crime gang involved in human trafficking in May 2009. The Police Service of Northern Ireland led Operation Sleek resulted in a number of properties searched and arrests made, with six victims of human trafficking rescued. The consular officer routinely examines all work visa applications for human trafficking concerns and provides each of these applicants with the CA issued human trafficking brochure.

¶10. DS criminal fraud investigations:

Post does not have an RSO or ARSO-I at post. Any cases that warrant investigation will be referred to RSO Embassy London.

¶11. Host country passport, identity documents, and civil registry:

The UK Passport Agency began issuing machine-readable passports in 1988 in line with Civil Aviation standards. Many changes and security enhancements have followed with the maroon-colored passport of today. In March 2006, the UK launched the biometric passport. The passport contains a chip which stores the passport holder's photo and biographic details printed on page 31 of the passport.

The Northern Ireland General Registrar's Office is reliable and efficient. Vulnerability and incidence of corruption and identity theft are relatively low.

¶12. Cooperation with host government authorities:

Post has good contacts with host government agencies. UK Border Agency and Police Service of Northern Ireland's Foreign Nationals Unit are cooperative in offering assistance in potential fraud cases.

¶13. Areas of particular concern:

Post has no areas of particular concern to report for this period.

¶14. Staffing and Training:

Post's Consular Officer, Michael Troje, is responsible for Fraud Prevention Management. LES ACS Assistant Deborah Steele attended PC-542 at FSI in 2006. During the reporting period, LES Catherine Redmond attended PC-542 and both post's ACS Assistant and one NIV Assistant traveled to Embassy London for training which included a session with FPU. FPU London staff periodically visit post to provide fraud prevention training. Their last visit was in January 2009.

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